

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

The specification has been amended to correct informalities noted on page 2 of the Office Action.

Claim 14 is currently being cancelled.

Claims 2, 4, 15 and 17 are currently being amended.

Claims 19 and 20 are currently being added.

This amendment amends and cancels claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-13 and 15-20 are now pending in this application.

The Examiner is requested to acknowledge receipt of the certified copy of the priority document that was submitted to the PTO on March 9, 2000.

Applicants appreciate the indication in the Office Action that claims 4-13 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the 35 U.S.C. Section 112, second paragraph, rejection, as set forth in the Office Action. Applicants also appreciate the indication in the Office Action that claims 15-18 would be allowed if those claims were rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of their base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 15 and 17 have each been written in independent form to include the features of their respective base claims and any intervening claims, and thus claims 15-18 are now in condition for allowance (claim 16 depends from claim 15, and claim 18 depends from claim 17). Claim 4 has been written in independent form, whereby the features of its base claim 1 have not been included in presently pending claim 4; however, presently pending claim 4 is believed to be in

condition for allowance (and thus its dependent claims 5-13 are also believed to be in condition for allowance), for at least the reasons set forth below.

In the Office Action, the drawings were objected to because of typographical errors noted in Figures 3, 7 and 20. By way of this amendment and reply, Figure 3, 7 and 20 have been corrected, and new formal drawings sheets for Figures 3, 7 and 20 are being submitted concurrently herewith.

In the Office Action, claims 2 and 4-13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, for the reasons set forth on page 3 of the Office Action. Claim 2 has been amended in accordance with the helpful suggestions made in the Office Action. Claim 4 has been amended such that claim 2 is now a separate independent claim that does not include the features of its previous base claim 1. Thus, the indefiniteness rejection of claim 4 has been overcome by way of amendment. Regarding claims 4-13, those claims are readable on the second embodiment, as an example.

In the Office Action, claims 1-3 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,726,778 to Tanio in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,476,924 to Toda et al. This rejection is traversed with respect to presently pending claims 1-3, for at least the reasons given below.

The image processing apparatus recited in presently pending independent claim 1 comprises:

color conversion means for converting a first color image signal that does not contain a black color component, into a second color image signal that does not contain a black component;

blackening processing means for adding a black component to the second color image signal to thereby create a third color image signal; and

compression means for compressing the third color image signal on the basis of a frequency conversion system.

That is, the image processing apparatus described in claim 1 compresses the converted color image signal after adding the black component to the converted color image signal (the second color image signal).

On the other hand, Tanio discloses a circuit which converts the color of a first image signal that does not contain a black component, and then performs a process for adding a black component to the first image signal. See column 6, lines 19-29 of Tanio, for example. Toda discloses an image processing apparatus that using a compression scheme that includes frequency conversion. See column 4, lines 55-56 of Toda. However, the combination of Tanio and Toda does not teach or suggestion an image processing apparatus that compresses a third color image signal on the basis of a frequency conversion system after adding the black component to the second color image signal that does not contain the black component, and forming the third color image signal.

Therefore, independent claim 1, as well as its dependent claims 2 and 3, are patentable over the combined teachings of Tanio and Toda.

With respect to claim 4, the Office Action asserted that this claim would be allowed if amended to place this claim in independent for to include the features of its base claim and any intervening claims. Claim 4 has been written in independent form, whereby the features of base claim 1 are not included in presently pending claim 4. It is believed that none of the cited art of record teaches or suggests the claimed image processing means that selectively executes image processing on the color image signal compressed by a compression means and then decoded by a decoding means, and that selectively executes image processing on the color image signal that has never been compressed.

New claims 19 and 20 have been added to recite additional features of the present invention that are believed to be patentable over the cited art of record. For example, new claim 19 recites features of the second embodiment shown in Figure 8 (see elements 2100, 2001 and 2002, for example). New claim 20 depends from claim 1, and includes features from the second

embodiment (see Figure 8). This is supported by the originally-filed claims, which support a combination of features from the first and second embodiments.

Accordingly, since there are no other objections or rejections raised in the Office Action, Applicants believe that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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